

# the "EYE"

## Lincoln Neighborhood Watch Spring & Summer-2009



### AUTO THEFT PREVENTION

Toward the end of 2008 there was an upswing in the number of cars being stolen. One method the thieves used repeatedly was to enter a car and then break the steering column open to gain access to the ignition switch wires. Once they could get to the ignition wires they would start the car and then drive it away. The following list contains some prevention measures to employ so that you are less likely to be victimized.

- ♦ Never leave your car running unattended, even to dash into a business, store, etc.;
- ♦ Never leave any keys in the car or ignition, inside a locked garage, or in hide-a-key boxes;
- ♦ Always roll up your windows and lock the car, even if it is parked in front of your home;
- ♦ Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Put them in the trunk out of sight;
- ♦ Always park in high-traffic, well-lighted areas, when possible;
- ♦ Install a mechanical device that locks the steering wheel, column, or brakes. These devices will deter some criminals:
  - \* *Locking Devices: Steering Wheel Bar Lock; Hood Restraint; Steering Column Collar; Tire/Wheel Locks; Gearshift Lock;*
  - \* *Cut-off Devices: Ignition Kill Switch; Fuel Kill Switch;*
- ♦ Investigate the purchase of a vehicle theft tracking/security system, especially if you own one of the frequently stolen model vehicles;
- ♦ Never leave personal identification documents, vehicle ownership title, or credit cards in your vehicle;
- ♦ If you must leave your key with a valet, attendant, or mechanic leave only the ignition key. Make sure you are dealing with a reputable firm;
- ♦ Copy your license plate and vehicle information (VIN) numbers on a card and keep them with you. If your vehicle is stolen, the police will need this information to take a report;
- ♦ Many vehicles today come with some type of security system from the factory. Normally there are upgraded systems available if you ask. The best choice are systems that shut off the fuel supply so that a car can't be started or driven.
- ♦ **If your vehicle is stolen, report it to the police immediately.**

### AREA LOCATIONS HIT HARD BY LARCENIES FROM AUTOS

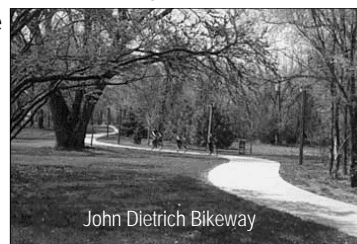


MoPac Station Trailhead at 84th St.

Our City Parks Department has worked to provide many beneficial green spaces for recreation, exercise and other use. There are extensive trail networks throughout the city where parking space has been conveniently added. These trailheads, along with other parking areas, have been the target spots for some thieves. The culprits soon discovered that people were leaving their wallets, purses, or other items of value in the car and then heading down the trail to jog or bike. Similarly, parking lots at fitness and gym facilities have been targeted. Patrons of those businesses exhibit the same behavior of leaving valuable items inside their vehicle while they are away engaging in whatever their activity is. Realizing that these people would be gone for 30 to 60 minutes

allowed the thieves ample time to break into the car and steal whatever they could find there. There are several things you can easily do to deter thieves from breaking into your vehicle:

- Remove all of your valuables when you leave;
- Secure valuables into the trunk or other places they can not be readily seen;
- Do not leave purses or briefcases in the car- they usually contain money, checks & credit cards;
- **LOCK YOUR VEHICLE !**



John Dietrich Bikeway

A theft from your vehicle could happen at any time, day or night. By reporting any suspicious activity, *while it is occurring*, you could save yourself from being victimized. If you see or hear anything that seems unusual or suspicious we want you to call the police.

### MCGRUFF HOUSE PARTICIPATION IS INCREASING



The McGruff House Program relies on volunteers who are willing to provide a temporary safe place for children in their neighborhood. Children who are being bullied, followed, or have been hurt could stop at a McGruff House for assistance. McGruff House Volunteers would then assist by telephoning for help, reassuring the children and providing them aid until parents or authorities arrive. McGruff Houses are generally organized around elementary school areas where children would be traveling. There is an annual application process for volunteers that includes a background check through the police department. This is done to ensure, as best is possible, that we are providing a safe place children can rely on. Volunteers are given a distinctive yellow and black McGruff House sign to place in their window where children could see it. The Lincoln Police Department purchases the signs and administers the program locally for the national organization so there are no costs to the volunteers. More volunteers would be welcome- so if you are interested please call the LPD Crime Prevention Group at 441-7261 and we will send you an informational packet and application form.

## **BICYCLE AWARENESS and SAFETY**

Warmer weather, a desire for physical exercise, recreation, increased gas prices, and thinking green are all reasons for more bicycle traffic on the roadways. There will also be coinciding increases in the number of motorists and pedestrians. Following, there are several suggestions for safe bicycling and some reminders for motorists. We would like to see everyone share the road with respect and patience toward fellow travelers.

### **Riding on the street:**

- Go with the flow of traffic.
- Ride on the right side of the street in single file.
- You must obey the rules of the road which includes traffic signs, signals, and road markings.
- Use proper hand signals.
- Hands should be kept on the handlebars.
- Only one person should be on a bike at a time unless it's a tandem bike.
- Stay alert: Keep a look-out for obstacles in your path. When going around any object, look ahead and behind you for a free gap in the traffic.
- Never weave from lane to lane or tailgate to hitch rides on moving cars.

### **Riding on the sidewalk:**

- If you are riding your bike out of a driveway, parking lot or alley, stop before crossing the sidewalk and wait for any pedestrians to pass by. Pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- If you are about to enter or cross a street from a sidewalk, driveway or alley, you should yield to all vehicles approaching on the roadway. Vehicles have the right-of-way.
- Look to the left-right-left before you cross the street.
- Walk your bike across the street at the corner or crosswalk.
- Warn a pedestrian that you're coming up behind them by saying, "on your left".

### **Riding off the road:**

- Follow designated bike routes if available, they are marked by special signs. Bike paths are special areas reserved for bikes and pedestrians.

### **Riding at night:**

- If you are riding your bike one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise, it must be equipped with the following:
- A white light attached to the front of your bike or worn by the bicycle's operator.
- The rear of the bike should have a red light that is attached to the bike or worn by the bicycle's operator.
- There should be either white or amber reflectors on the front and back of the pedals.
- Wear light colored or reflective clothing, especially on your ankles, wrists, back and helmet.
- Ride in areas that are well lit.

**\*\*Chapter 10.48 = city bike ordinances (available as Lincoln Municipal Code on city web-site under City Attorney's Office).**

### **Safety Checklist:**

#### **Protect your head– wear a helmet!**

- Studies have shown that using a bicycle helmet can reduce head injuries by up to 85%.
- The helmet should sit level on top of your head, not tilted back or forward.
- Select a helmet that has a snug, but comfortable fit when the straps are adjusted.
- Look for good ventilation to keep your head cool in hot weather.
- Pick a helmet that's a bright color so you're more visible to drivers and others on the road.
- For more information on bike helmets contact American National - Standards Institute at [www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org) or the Snell Memorial Foundation at [www.smf.org](http://www.smf.org).
- Adjust the handlebars and seat.
- Test your brakes. Make sure the pads hit the rim of the wheel and not the tire or the spokes.
- Check your tire pressure. Use a gauge to make sure you don't over-inflate your tires. The correct pressure is printed on the tire. Check your tires for cuts or cracks.
- Make sure any "quick release" levers are tight.
- Check your chain for wear. It should be clean and well-lubed.
- Have your bike lock with you.
- Dress properly– wear bright clothing so you'll be visible. Avoid any loose clothing that could get caught in the chain or spokes.

#### **Stolen bikes:**

*Through 2008– 556 reports of bikes stolen;*

*7.0 % decrease from previous year;*

*However, dollar loss of stolen bikes is at \$98,000*

#### **Bike security:**

- Record serial number and keep in a secure place;
- Keep a photograph of the bike;
- Engrave your name or OLN # onto the bike;
- Use a U-lock or heavy gauge chain lock- several brands available;
- Lock bike to a secure object- bike rack, sign post, tree (not to the fire hydrant please!);
- Always lock- don't have the "I'm only running inside for a second" mentality.

## **"Sharing the Road: Motorists"** from the:

 **Bicycle Friendly Community**

### **Drive Cautiously:**

- > Reduce speed when encountering cyclists
- > Don't tailgate, especially in bad weather
- > Recognize hazards cyclists may face and give them space

### **Yield to Cyclists:**

- > Bicycles are considered vehicles
- > Cyclists should be given the appropriate right of way
- > Allow extra time for cyclists to traverse intersections

### **Be Considerate:**

- > Scan for cyclists in traffic and at intersections
- > Do not blast your horn in close proximity to cyclists
- > Look for cyclists when opening doors

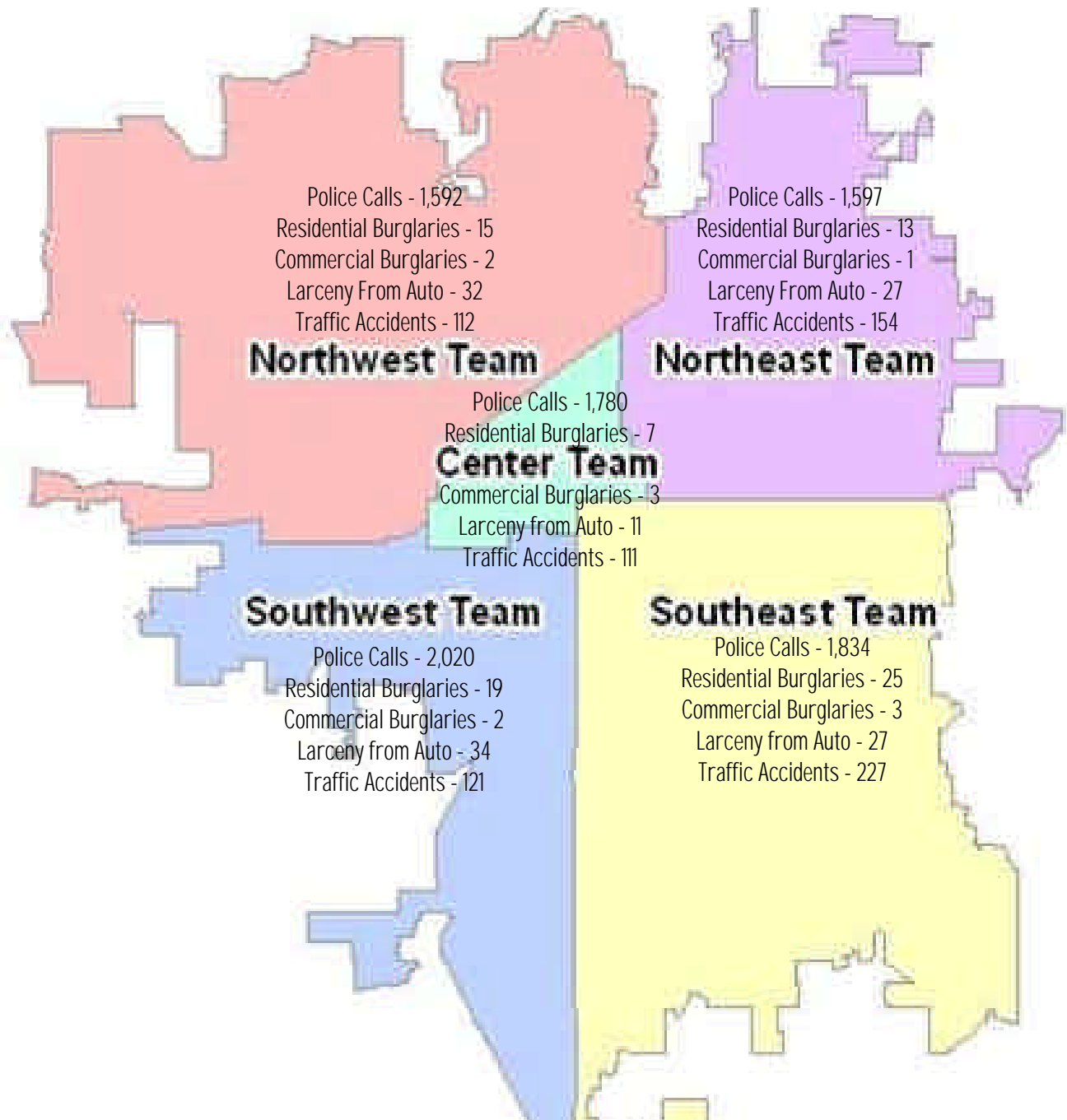
### **Pass with Care:**

- > When passing, leave four feet between you and a cyclist
- > Wait for safe road and traffic conditions before you pass
- > Check over your shoulder before moving back

### **Watch for Children:**

- > Children on bicycles are often unpredictable
- > Expect the unexpected and slow down
- > Don't expect children to know traffic laws
- > Because of their size children can be harder to see

**SUMMARY OF REPORTED CRIMES-between 1-1-2009 and 2-28-2009**



**STATISTICAL SUMMARY FOR YEAR END 2008**

Throughout 2008 there were 128,063 police calls for service across the city- a 7.4% decrease compared to 2007. Except for robberies all reported crime categories were lower in 2008. Numbers include: 1,218 residential burglaries (16% fewer); 331 commercial burglaries (28% fewer); 2,794 larcenies from autos (12% fewer); and 8,918 traffic accidents (8% down - 5% fewer injury accidents and 50% fewer fatality accidents). Reported robberies were the only category that increased- up almost 30% (217 in 2008 vs. 167 in 2007). During this time DWI arrests increased 29%, criminal arrests increased 10% and traffic tickets were up by 12%.

There are several factors affecting the reduction of reported incidents one of which continues to be citizens' willingness to communicate with your police department. Calling the police directly has allowed officers to make timely responses and stop crimes in progress. Other call-in avenues, such as Crime Stoppers, have also been instrumental in making arrests and clearing crimes. Please continue to communicate with your neighbors and the police- hopefully we'll continue this downward trend of crime in our city.

## ***The "EYE"***

Lincoln Police Department  
Crime Prevention Unit  
575 South 10th St.  
Lincoln, NE 68508

***Return Service Requested***



### **ON-LINE ACCESSIBILITY**

The current economic conditions have resulted in most of us reassessing our budgets. City government, which includes the police department, has not been exempted from evaluating (and then re-evaluating) where we can trim some costs. Through these times the Lincoln Police Department will remain dedicated in our efforts to promote the Neighborhood Watch program and the citizens who are willing to join us in taking a proactive approach in preventing crime to make our neighborhoods safer.

We are currently trying to implement a dedicated e-mail address for Neighborhood Watch so we can electronically send information and notices via computer. Our hope is that we can reduce money spent on postage and related costs.

Our Neighborhood Watch e-mail address is: [lpdwatch@cjis.lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:lpdwatch@cjis.lincoln.ne.gov)

When sending an e-mail to us please include your name, address and Neighborhood Watch Group number. We do not give any Neighborhood Watch group information to anyone outside the police department and, likewise, we will not be giving anyone's e-mail address or information to any entity outside the police department.

We will be able to send crime trend information quickly and efficiently through e-mail plus notify group coordinators when the next edition of "The EYE" is available on the LPD website. Our hope is that coordinators will create an e-mail group for their watch area and then forward this information to their members.

**We realize that there is still a need to reach members in a traditional way and we will continue to maintain a mailing list to send notices and newsletters through the mail to them. We will not leave anyone out!**

It is often reported that Lincoln has one of the smallest police departments for a city our size. Regardless of size we are one of the most successful police departments in the area. This success is due to dedicated employees and to one of our greatest assets: **Citizens who are willing to communicate with each other and with their police department!**

### **"DRIVE NICE! It's Contagious"**

from: [www.driveniceday.org](http://www.driveniceday.org)

- ♦ Drive with High Aim Vision. That is, look further down the road – at least 12 to 15 seconds ahead of your vehicle. When in heavy traffic where your view is often blocked, avoid staring at the taillights of the vehicle in front of you. Instead, try to look around or even through the vehicle in front of you. Looking further ahead – High Aim Vision – provides you with more reaction time, and makes you more aware of things all around your vehicle.
- ♦ Give your driving a S.P.A. treatment: When the road and traffic conditions change, adjust your Speed, Position and Attention level. If the road conditions worsen, or there is more traffic, slow down, choose the best lane to be in or even move your vehicle within its lane slightly to see better, and pay more attention to what's going on around you. Remember, adjust your Speed, Position and Attention to suit the conditions.
- ♦ Put your cell phone away. Nothing bad will happen if you wait to make your call after you arrive at your destination. Something bad could happen if you don't.
- ♦ Be patient. If you were to drive as fast as you possibly could, you will only ever gain a few seconds or minutes during a typical commute, but the extra risk inherent in doing so is much greater. Think of taking your time as, "Short term pain for long term gain."
- ♦ Finally, think about others on the road not as other vehicles, but as people. See other drivers just as they are – as humans – and not as a large mass of steel, rubber and plastic. Every single vehicle on the road with you is driven by a fellow human – treat other vehicles as you would any other human if you were face to face with them.